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THE
DISTINGUISHING
PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE
OF THE
BAPTISTS
VINDICATED;
IN SEVEN DIALOGUES:

OR,
AN ANSWER TO
*Mr. Shrubsole's Plain Christian Shepherd's
Defence of his Flock.*

BY JOHN KNOTT. *K*

KEEP THE ORDINANCES AS I DELIVERED THEM TO YOU.

I COR. II. 27

Rochester :
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,
BY CHRISTOPHER ETHERINGTON, NO. 181.
AND SOLD BY W. BUTTON, NO. 24. PATER-NOSTER
ROW, LONDON,

1794.

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DIALOGUE I.

EVANGELICUS AND HONESTUS.

Evangelicus. I Am glad to see you, friend *Honestus*. My mind is in a state which seems to call for the relaxation of friendly conversation. I hope you come to spend the evening with me.

Hon. I came, Sir, with that design. Your friendship I esteem, I have a particular wish for conversation with you at this time.

Evan. Does any particular occurrence occasion that wish?

Hon. I hope I have a sincere desire to know and follow the will of my Divine Master. What is his will, and my duty, with respect to the ordinance of baptism, have for some time occupied much of my thoughts. I have been reading a late publication of a neighbouring minister, Mr. Shrubsole, on that subject. The contents of that publication, I wish candidly to examine. That, therefore, I propose as the subject of our evening's conversation.

Evan. What is the title of the publication to which you allude?

Hon. It is intitled, "The Plain Christian Shepherd's Defence of his Flock." Being Five Letters in support of Infant Baptism.

Evan. Does the author mean to hold forth the Baptists as dangerous *robbers* of Churches, or as *wolves* in sheep's cloathing (as I remember to have seen them termed) that he deems a defence of the flock necessary?

Hon. He speaks of their intemperate zeal for the propagation of their peculiar sentiments, as having been likely to produce disunion in one Christian Society; and of having been informed of the same intemperate zeal operating elsewhere.

Evan. The Baptists have undoubtedly endeavoured to vindicate what they believed to be the cause of God and of Truth, when that hath been attacked. They have, likewise, on occasions which have called for it, given the reasons of their practice. This, surely, they have a right to do. I know not of any thing further that has occurred, at least in our neighbourhood, to sanction the charge of intemperate zeal.

Hon. I must confess, that if there has, I have not observed it.

Evan. Does Mr. S. advance any thing new in support of infant baptism?

Hon. Perhaps not. Arguments, however, are not the worse for being old.

Evan. True; yet to re-say from the press, what has been repeatedly said before, seems unnecessary; unless some particular occasion call for it; which, it does not appear to me, has occurred in the sphere in which this author moves. I am willing, however, to examine what he has produced, be it new,

or old. But previous to that, it may be proper, I think, to enquire what kind of evidence the nature of the case requires.

Hon. I think so too. I wish you to state your sentiments on that subject.

Evan. Baptism, is an ordinance of the *positive* kind. That is, it arises not necessarily from the natural relation of Man to God, or to his fellow creatures; but hath its foundation solely in the positive institution of God himself. Such institutions there have been under every dispensation of grace. Such was the prohibition respecting the fruit of the tree of knowledge, in man's primeval state. Such was the appointment of sacrifices under the patriarchal dispensation. Such were circumcision, and various other rites, under the Mosaic law. Such also are baptism and the Lord's supper, under the New Testament Dispensation.

Hon. But what would you infer from hence?

Evan. That the revealed will of the Divine Legislator respecting the rite itself, is to be regarded as the *only rule* of our conduct with regard to the mode and subject of it. It would never have been, for instance, the duty of Abraham, to have circumcised himself, his male domestics, or his offspring, had it not been for the positive command of God. Of circumcision he could have known nothing, but by the positive divine command. That, therefore, was the sole rule of his conduct, with respect to that institution. It is equally so with respect to baptism, under the New Testament dispensation. Baptism would not have been a duty at all, had it not been positively enjoined by God. His revealed will is, therefore, to be regarded as the sole rule of our conduct, with regard to that ordinance. Had Abra-

ham, or his descendants, argued from *analogy*, what might have been deemed *moral fitness*, or what would have squared with human notions of *decency*; the original institution would soon have been lost. So, in regard to baptism if we adhere not closely and conscientiously to positive precept, or the precedent of divinely inspired men; we shall soon be lost in uncertainty and wild conjecture. Does Mr. S. say any thing on this subject?

Hon. I do not recollect that he does.

Evan. He deserts, then, the only ground, on which satisfaction with respect to the matter of enquiry can be obtained; and we might well be excused following him. But what are the arguments he produces?

Hon. I must refer the answer to another opportunity. I wish to revolve what has been already said, in my mind, and shall therefore, for the present, take my leave.

Evan. Farewell; and the Lord direct you in this, and all other things.

DIALOGUE II.

Evan. MY Friend, Honestus, now comes furnished, I presume, with a formidable train of arguments from Mr. S. in support of Infant Baptism. I therefore again ask, what are the arguments he produces?

Hon. How formidable the train, experiment must decide, Perhaps my friend Evangelicus may find them more formidable than he at present apprehends, I will, however, endeavour to bring them forward. First, then, baptism succeeded circumcision in the church of God. Consequently as infants had a right to the one, so they have to the other.

Evan. "Baptism succeeded circumcision in the church of God." How is this proved? Do the scriptures suggest that idea?

Hon. Mr. S. says, "that baptism is the circumcision of Christ, so called by an apostle." Alluding, I suppose, to Col. 2. 11. *In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ.*

Evan. You will observe, that the circumcision the apostle speaks of, is a *circumcision made WITHOUT HANDS*: which can no more be said of baptism literally, than of circumcision. What the apostle intends by the *circumcision made without hands*, is the regeneration of the heart; which, and not

baptism, is the antitype of circumcision in the flesh; agreeably to Deut. 10. 6 *The Lord thy God, shall circumcise thy heart, &c.* To Phil. 3. 3. *We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* And to Rom. 2. 29 *Circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not of Men, but of God.* Regeneration, and not baptism is the Christian circumcision,

Hon. But the apostle, in the verse following, expressly mentions baptism; *buried with him in baptism, &c.*

Evan. He does so. But it does not from thence follow, that by baptism he intends the circumcision made without hands; which, indeed, he could not do, without evident absurdity. The apostle, in that context, enforces by various arguments, that purity of life, and stability in the faith which he had been inculcating. One very powerful argument is, their having been the subjects of the circumcision of Christ, that is, regeneration; another, that they had by baptism most solemnly professed their faith in the heart purifying doctrine of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; of which baptism is a figure. I must think, that in this instance the argument of Mr. S. fails.—Does he produce any other testimony from the New Testament, that baptism is the succedaneum of circumcision?

Hon. Not any direct testimony that I recollect.

Evan. It is strange, indeed, if our Lord intended baptism as the succedaneum of circumcision, and that the one should be a directory to us respecting the proper subjects of the other; that neither he nor his inspired apostles should have given us any intimation of it. More strange yet, that in all the

controversy about the continuance of circumcision, it should never have been said, you need not trouble yourselves about the circumcision of the foreskin of the flesh. Baptism is appointed in its stead, which is a right equally significant and more mild. Stranger still, if one was the divinely appointed succedaneum of the other, that both should be by divine authority in practice at the same time; as it is evident they were. Baptism commencing with John's ministry, and circumcision not being abolished till after the death of our Lord.

Besides, if circumcision is to be considered as our directory, respecting the subjects of Baptism, it should be followed throughout; and then only males would be baptized. Nor would a credible profession of repentance and faith be requisite to Baptism, even in adults; for that was never required, previous to circumcision as a prerequisite to that ordinance even in adults. On the contrary, descent from Abraham; the being born in his house or bought with his money, gave a right to circumcision, and rendered it a duty, independent of any other consideration.

Hon. We will, if you please, proceed to the consideration of another argument, by which Mr. Shrubsole endeavours to strengthen and confirm that which we have already examined. "I would have you, (he says) ever to keep in mind, that the christian church is only a continuation of that church which God had among the Jews under another name, therefore, if Infant Baptism did not succeed Circumcision there was a very great alteration made in respect to receiving persons into the church, without any notice being given of it, or any reason being rendered for it.

Surely, this strongly establishes the right of infants to be initiated by baptism into the Christian Church.

Evan. Let us, my good friend, examine the premises a little; and not too hastily come to a conclusion. When Mr. Shrubsole says, that the christian church is only a continuation of that church which God had among the Jews. If he means, that gracious men worshipped the same God, thro' the same mediator, and, that internal religion was essentially the same then as now; he says, what is true, internal religion has been essentially the same in all ages, and under all dispensations, whether Patriarchal Jewish, or Christian.

But does it follow from hence, that positive rites under different dispensations, must be the same? Or that the Christian church must have some succedaneum for every positive institution of the Jewish church? By no means. Internal religion may subsist, and in fact has subsisted, without either circumcision or baptism. They depend, not on any essential connection with that; but on the positive appointment of the divine legislator. No inference, therefore, can be fairly drawn from hence, in favour of the right of infants to baptism. But if he means that the visible form of the church of God, has been the same under both dispensations, he says what is both false and dangerous.

Hon. Please to illustrate your assertion by some particular instance, that I may judge of its truth or error.

Evan. The Jewish church was national, it consisted of the whole body of the people whether good or bad. All had a right to all its external privileges, unless ceremonially unclean, without any respect had to their being, or not being, regenerate. But no intimation of any national form of Church government is given in the New Testament. Under the Christian dispensation distinct churches were formed, consist-

ing of such and such only, as had, or who were, in a judgment of charity, concluded to have been quickened by divine grace. Eph. 2. 1. who had gladly received the word, and were connected together in bonds of special fellowship. Acts 2. 41, 42. Of saints in Christ Jesus, with their bishops and deacons. Phil. 1. 1.—Of such who had come to Christ as a living stone, and were as lively stones, built upon him, &c. 1 Pet. 2. 4, 5.—Those whom the Lord added to the church, were not nations, or political bodies of men; but such from among them as should be saved. Acts 2. 47—I say, *distinct churches*, were formed of such; as, the churches of Judea, of Galatia, of Corinth, of Cenchrea, a port near to Corinth, &c. &c. In this respect, then, the difference is both striking and important. To argue, therefore, for the admission of infants, and unregenerate persons, into Christian churches, because they were comprehended in the Jewish national church, as Mr. S. seems to do in his pamphlet: is not only delusive, but likewise dangerous. It tends to blend the church and the world; to encourage hypocritical formalists in Zion; to enervate the discipline of the church and to sink that spirituality which is so eminently designed to prevail in the church of Christ, into mere outward formality.

Hon. But as "The Jewish, as well as the patriarchal church, consisted of men, women, and children; if infant baptism did not succeed circumcision, one third part of the members of the church were cut off."

Evan. Mr. S. might as well have said nine tenths. For if the unregenerate, as such, be unfit members of a gospel church; there is reason to fear that more than that proportion in national bodies, in ge-

neral, will be found in that awful state. But with respect to any real loss sustained, by the church of God under the Christian dispensation, from its visible form's being more distinct and sepearate from the world which lieth in wickedness ; or from its special privileges being confined to those who appear to have known the grace of God in truth ; I cannot conceive of any. It rather appears to me, to be a part of the especial glory, and superior excellence of the Church of Christ.

Hon. But on your hypothesis, children are deprived of their ancient rights, even when we might have supposed, that their privileges would have been enlarged, under a more free and benign dispensation,

Evan. With regard to the depriving children of their ancient rights, about which so much clamour is made, the hypothesis of Mr. S. is as chargeable with it, as is that of the Baptists. For if baptism succeeded circumcision, the Lord's supper succeeded the passover. Now children among the Jews were admitted to the passover ; yet neither Mr. S. nor his brethren admit them to the Lord's Supper. If it be said that communicants at the Lord's Table are required to *discern the Lord's Body*, of which infants are incapable ; we reply, that the subjects of baptism are required to *believe with all the heart*, of which they are equally incapable.

Hon. " The cases are very dissimilar. In the ordinance of baptism, the person baptized is a *patient* ; but in the Lord's Supper he is an agent. *Take, eat, do this.* Therefore a child is capable of baptism, but not of receiving the Lord's Supper."

Evan. But if this distinction in the case before us were just you must perceive it would have been as applicable to circumcision and the passover, as to

baptism and the Lord's Supper ; and therefore it will not free you from the dreadful charge of depriving children of their ancient rights. But the distinction is far from being just. The sacred scriptures are far from representing the subject baptized as merely passive. One passage may for the present suffice. " As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have *put on* Christ," Gal. 3. 27.—Surely, putting on Christ, which is said of all the baptized Galatians, is expressive of something more than the being a mere unconscious patient.

Hon. But admitting, (for I know not how to deny it) that your opponents are guilty as well as yourselves ; this does not satisfy me. I think it strange that the privileges of children should be less under the Christian dispensation, than they were under the Jewish.

Evan. Although the use of certain rites, respecting infants, peculiar to former dispensations, ceased with the existence of those dispensations ; yet the privileges of children, where the Gospel is preached, far exceed those of Jewish children, as they are favoured with means far more conducive to the knowledge of themselves and of Christ Jesus the Lord. Access to the oracles of God, in which the advantage of the circumcised Jew of old chiefly lay, Rom. 9. 2. is now, with much greater advantage, opened to the children of the uncircumcised Gentile.

What superior advantages do the children of Pedobaptist parents enjoy, above the children of Baptist parents ? If baptism itself be a privilege, it is in consequence of divine appointment, and as attended with a divine blessing ; which, to take for granted as it respects infant baptism, is merely begging the question. In all other respects the chil-

dren of both are perfectly on a level. And the children of Baptists are, I humbly, conceive, as frequented favoured with the blessings of distinguishing grace, and as frequently make useful members of the church of God upon earth, as the children of their neighbours. What is therefore said, about depriving children of their ancient privileges, is mere declamation; calculated to mislead, those only who, without examination, are led away with empty sounds.

Hon. The concerns of my family by this time, call for my presence at home. I shall consider what you have said; and on some other opportunity, we will further investigate the subject. Till then, I bid you farewell.

Evan. Adieu. The God of Peace and Truth be with you.

DIALOGUE III.

Hon. I have now an opportunity to proceed in the subject of our former conversations, if convenient to my friend Evangelicus.

Evan. I am ready to comply with the wish of my friend.

Hon. Mr. S. says, that infants were commanded to attend the public worship of God ; referring to Joel 2. 16. and speaks of the necessity and advantages of their presence. I acknowledge myself, however, to be incapable of discerning the force of his reasoning, as applicable to the subject before us, and shall therefore pass it. But when he argues that the children of the Jews were always considered as connected with their parents in the transactions of God with them, (and refers to Gen. 17. 7. 14. Isai. 59. 21. 65. 23. Ezek. 16. 20, 21.) I think he says, what ought to have some weight in this controversy.

Evan. It is strange that in a controversy respecting the subjects of baptism, (a New Testament ordinance) we should be sent to Moses and the Prophets for direction ; and not rather to the writings of Evangelists and Apostles. It is much more consonant to the character of the Lord Jesus Christ, to suppose that, with respect to an ordinance peculiar to the Gospel dispensation, he has given plain directions in those scriptures which were written under that dispensation ; than to suppose, that he has left

us to infer them by long, perplexed, and uncertain reasoning upon Old Testament passages and rites. We will, however, examine what Mr. S. has said on the subject.

That the children of the Jews were *always* considered as connected with their parents, in the transactions of God with them, is an assertion that requires more proof to establish it, than Mr. S. has thought proper to give. That they *sometimes* were, is certain. The passages produced from Gen. 17. respect the covenant God made with Abraham. That covenant was of a mixed nature ; including, not only spiritual blessings, but also peculiar temporal ones. This is plain from verse 4. *I will make thee the father of many nations*, and verse 8. *I will give unto thee, and thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession*. Agreeably to this distinction, Abraham's seed are of two sorts ; his natural posterity, in a particular line, on the one hand, and his spiritual seed on the other. This distinction is made by the apostle, Rom. 9. 8. *That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God ; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed*. The special temporal blessings belonged to Abraham's posterity, as such. With this branch of the Abrahamic covenant circumcision appears to have been especially connected ; and to have been appointed as a means of preserving the race of Abraham, in the line of Isaac, distinct from others, and as an abiding mark, to be a token or sign of that covenant, and a means of strengthening the faith of his descendants in the peculiar promises of it. But what this has to do with the right of infants to baptism, (a positive ordinance, belonging to a different dispensation) I cannot perceive.

Is. 59. 21. *As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seeds seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.* Now this cannot relate to carnal descent; for, if so, the promise has palpably failed. No, it is a promise of the continuance of the spirit and word of God, to the church in all succeeding ages. So that those, spiritually born in her, (Psal. 87. 5.) shall be favoured with the same spirit and embrace the same truth.

A similar observation will equally apply to Isai. 65. 23. I do not, therefore, think a more particular reply needful.

Ezek. 16. 20, 21. *Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast born unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured, &c.* This merely proves the aggravated guilt of the idolatrous and cruel conduct of the Israelites, in sacrificing their children to idols, arising from the peculiar national covenant then subsisting between God and them, and cannot have even the most remote reference to the right of infants to baptism, under a different dispensation. That cause must be tottering indeed, which requires such far-fetched and inconclusive arguments to support it.

Hon. If those passages be foreign and inconclusive, perhaps what I would now urge, may not be found equally so. Circumcision and baptism are to be considered as seals of the same covenant of grace, consequently, as infants had a right to the one, they must also have a claim to the other. I do not give the exact words of Mr. S. but his sense as collected from different parts of his pamphlet.

Evan. What does my Friend Honellus, or his author, mean by a seal of the covenant of grace?

Hon. I do not recollect that my author explicitly declares what he intends by the term. But what I intend is, a sign or token fixed by God to that covenant, declarative of the right of the subject to the blessings of it.

Evan. But can either circumcision or baptism, be in this sense justly called a seal of the covenant of grace? All Abraham's male domestics and offspring, Ishmael, Esau, and the whole body of the Jews who entered Canaan, were circumcised. Had they all an interest in the blessings of the covenant of grace? Enoch, who *walked with God*; Noah, Melchisedeck, &c. were not circumcised. Were they excluded the blessings of that covenant?

Hon. You must distinguish between the outward and visible, and the secret and mystical, church of God; between the outward and visible sign, and the inward and spiritual grace; between external covenant relation, and a spiritual and saving interest in the covenant of grace.

Evan. And so, if possible raise a dust of distinctions and words, that may hinder persons from attending to, and following the plain directions of my Lord, respecting a positive institution of his! I can, however, distinguish between a mere outward profession, and the possession of real religion: but am yet to be convinced, that the New Testament authorizes a reception of any into a Gospel church, but those who make a credible profession of experimental religion itself. External relation to the covenant of grace, as distinguished from a spiritual, saving interest therein, I can find no foundation for in the word of God. That

covenant appears to me to be wholly spiritual and absolute. Heb. 8. 10, 11, 12.

Hon. Mr. S. shews, that the unconverted Jews of his day are called *the children of the kingdom*.—Matt. 23. 12.

Evan. But can my friend read the whole passage. *The children of the kingdom, shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*; and yet believe that the kingdom there spoken of, is that of the covenant of grace? Surely not. Our Lord certainly intended, that national and typical state of things, which had till then subsisted among the Jews; but which was then to be abolished. It is surprizing to find such passages produced in favour of the supposed right of infants to baptism.

Hon. But our Lord uses the same terms, when speaking of his church under the Gospel dispensation. Matt. 13. 38.

Evan. He does so; yet the reference to the passage is a little unhappily made. For, it is evident from the context, that, by *the children of the kingdom*, our Lord intends, the real subjects of grace, who *shall shine forth in the kingdom of their father*; those who are opposed to the tares, or *the children of the wicked one*, who shall be cast into a furnace of fire. My friend Honestus, must produce something a little more to the purpose, or I fear that my patience will fail.

Hon. I shall not weary it much longer this evening. One thing more, however, I must mention. Circumcision is said, by the Apostle, to have been *a seal of the righteousness of faith*. Rom. 4. 11.

Evan. Yes; but it was to Abraham personally, as is plain from the passage itself. *He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the*

Faith, which HE had being yet uncircumcised. That is, God, when he commanded Abraham to circumcise himself, graciously recognised the faith with which, by divine grace, he was endued; and which had an inseparable connexion with that covenant into which he then entered with him, and appointed circumcision as an abiding sign or mark of the peculiar covenant in which he stood related to him. But does it follow from hence, that circumcision was a seal of the covenant of grace to all his unbelieving posterity? or that baptism succeeded circumcision? or that it is a seal of the covenant of grace? If it does, I must confess that the evidence of it is far beyond my comprehension.

Hon. It is time for us to close the conversation for the present. I will, Providence permitting, call on you again at a convenient season.

Evan. Before we part, I would ask, do you think that Mr. S. has brought satisfactory evidence, that baptism is the succedaneum of circumcision? or that the latter is to be the rule of our conduct respecting the subjects of the former?

Hon. I find my mind at present bewildered, and must therefore defer a determination. Besides, more evidence remains to be examined.

Evan. That kind of evidence, which is calculated to perplex the mind; and which needs a long train of abstruse reasoning in order to its being discerned, is certainly ill suited to the nature of a positive Divine Ordinance, such as baptism is. I shall be ready to investigate the subject further, whenever it suits you. In the mean time, farewell.

DIALOGUE IV.

Hon. Having a spare half hour, I wait on you again, Evangelicus, and wish to improve the time in the further investigation of the subject lately under our consideration. Our preceding conversations have been pretty much confined to the contents of Mr. S's. first letter. If you please, we will now proceed to the second, in which he considers baptism, as practised by John the Baptist, and by our Blessed Saviour.

Evan. Very proper. But what from thence appears in support of his favourite cause?

Hon. He admits that they baptized adults; for, by introducing a new dispensation, and a new name into the same church of God, the first converts must needs be adult persons. But those instances he considers as impertinent to the matter in dispute. "They furnish, indeed, his opponents with a specious, but very weak argument for adult baptism; by which many young and weak persons are drawn into their party."

Evan. Whether scriptural instances of the baptism of adult persons, be impertinent to the argument, or not, we will consider another time. At present, I am acting on the defensive only. Whether persons who embrace baptist sentiments be merely the young and the weak, is far from being decisive in the enquiry, *What is truth?* Mr. S. may perhaps confine wisdom, and mental strength, to his own party. Doubtless ye are the men, and wis-

dom will die with you. But what proof does he produce, that infant baptism was practised by John the Baptist, or by our blessed Lord?

Hon. "The common usage of the church, led them to do it."

Evan. What, had the ordinance of baptism, then been of long standing in the church?

Hon. Mr. S. does not say so. But he considers baptism, you know, as succeeding circumcision, which was performed on infants.

Evan. That is merely a repetition of an argument already considered, and, I think sufficiently refuted.

Hon. But the known zeal of Jewish parents for the birth-privileges of their children, would induce them to expect it, and to protest against any innovation that was injurious to their offspring."

Evan. It is strange that Mr. S. should talk of *innovation* in a dispensation which he acknowledges to have been *new*. Or that he should think of their protesting against the exclusion of their infants from baptism, under the idea of its coming in the room of circumcision, at a time when circumcision itself continued; which was certainly the fact, at the period we are now considering.

Hon. In confirmation of his idea, he urges, "It is said, that salvation came to Zacheus's house, that is, to him and his family; and the nobleman believed in the Lord with all his house, or family."

Evan. Luke 19. 9. Joh. 4. 53. are the passages alluded to. I can hardly suppress a smile at the production of them, as proving the right of infants to baptism; about which ordinance there is not a syllable in the text or context. Might not salvation be said to come to Zacheus's house, when our Lord the salvation of Israel, entered it with a message of

peace, and purposes of mercy? yes, doubtless, without connecting the idea of the baptism of infants, if there were any, of which no intimation is made. Or does the nobleman's *believing in God with all his house*, prove that there were infants in his family incapable of faith, and that they were baptized?

Hon. " If those Jews who were sent forth by our Lord to preach, had been sent forth to gain proselytes to Judaism, the children would have been received; therefore we may justly conclude it was the same as to their gaining disciples to Jesus." This Mr. S. illustrates by the metaphor of an house, its entrance, inhabitants, &c. too long for me now to repeat.

Evan. You need not do it; because I have read, and remember it. Both his argument, and his illustration, go on the principle; That the visible form of the Jewish, and of the Christian church, is the same, including the same kind of subjects; the fallacy of which has already been shewn. Take away this supposition, and both totally fail. In the propagation of Judaism, male children, and those only, would have been circumcised; because of God's express command. But Judaism, and Christianity are not the same. When either a divine command to baptize infants, or an example of the practice of it by men Divinely inspired, is produced, we shall readily comply.

Hon. " You urgently desire your opponents, to shew you a command from the word of God for baptizing infants. With far more reason may they desire of you, to shew them a prohibition to baptize them. The children have ever been in possession of the house of God; and they have a divine right to keep possession; until the great Master of the House ejects them."

Evan. Arguments of this kind, my good friend, however plausible, might as fairly be urged for the admission of persons grossly ignorant, or evidently unregenerate, to all the privileges of the church of Christ; or for the retaining much of the trumpery of the church of Rome, (it is indeed the dernier resort of her champions) as in the case before us. This, however, we may learn from the production of such arguments; that neither a Divine Precept, nor a Scriptural Precedent, is to be found.

Hon. Mr. S. refers to Matt. 19. 14. with which he seems to connect Matt. 18. 3. 6. *Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.*

Evan. Were those children brought to Christ for baptism; or did he then baptize them?

Hon. Mr. S. does not suppose that he did.

Evan. How, then, is infant baptism proved from the case?

Hon. "There is reason to believe that they were the baptized children of believing parents."

Evan. A bold conjecture! But, as far as I can perceive, totally destitute of proof.

Hon. The case "manifests the solicitude which the Jews had for their children's best welfare and religious privileges."

Evan. I suppose that baptist parents are as solicitous for their children's best welfare, as either Jewish or Pedobaptist parents: but they do not from hence conclude, that they have a right to substitute inventions of their own in the room of positive appointments of Jesus Christ; or that their children's best welfare, or really religious privileges, would at all be promoted by their so doing,

Hon. " Our Lord considered the faith of the parents as the faith of the children, with whom they were connected in covenant relation to God ; and he speaks of the infants not as brought to him, but as coming to him ; and the little one is said to believe in him."

Evan. This is a very dangerous way of talking, much more likely to produce a fatal security in young persons, by encouraging them to rest in supposed birth-privileges, and in an external rite, than to promote their best welfare. Does it really follow from our Lord's saying, *Suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto me*, that they were in covenant relation to God, in consequence of the faith of their parents ? respecting the little one spoken of as believing in Christ ; it is evident from the context, that our Lord is speaking of a real subject of converting grace. Matt. 18. 3 - 6.

Hon. " Our Lord gives the following reason why young children should be brought to him, viz. " For of such is the kingdom of God." This is another strong evidence, of baptism succeeding circumcision in the church of God, which is the kingdom here meant."

Evan. When our Lord says *of such is the kingdom of Heaven* ; he means persons of such a disposition. Agreeably to Matt. 18. 3. *Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.* Nor is it at all necessary to understand our Lord (in Matt. 19. 14.) as intending the church of God on earth, by the phrase, *The kingdom of Heaven.* It is, at least, as applicable to the kingdom of eternal glory,

Hon. Mr. S. says, " The observation of the Lord's day, or first day of the week, has no express warrant from scripture, to succeed the seventh day, any more than baptism has to succeed circumcision.

Evan. The cases are not parallel. The setting a part of a certain portion of time for solemn waiting upon God, is an obligation of a *moral* nature. Baptism is an institution *purely positive*. The observation, therefore, is impertinent to the case in hand. Further, with respect to the change of the sabbath from the seventh day in the week, to the first, it either is, or is not warranted by the word of God. If it be without warrant, the practice must be wrong; and if so, one error can by no means justify another. But if there be, (which I believe there is, and suppose Mr. S. believes so to) sufficient warrant from the New Testament to believe that the change actually took place under the direction of men divinely inspired, the observation is still more impertinent.

Hon. "There is no command or precept for admitting women to the Lord's Supper;" yet you admit them.

Evan. When you say, after Mr. S. "No command or precept," I suppose for *precept*, it should be *precedent*; otherwise there is no distinction between the words.

That women were a part of the nations whom our Lord commissioned his Apostles to teach and baptize, is plain from the conduct of the primitive Evangelists. They taught and baptized those of the one sex, as well as of the other. Acts 8. 12. They, consequently, were included in the following part of the commission; *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*. This doubtless includes the commemoration of his death in the Lord's Supper. Women were baptized as well as men. Now, baptized persons, without any distinction of sex, were added to the church; and all that were added by the Lord, *continued steadfastly in*

the Apostles doctrine, and in fellowship, and in BREAKING OF BREAD. Acts 2. 41—47. It is needless to say more on a point so clear. Wretched, indeed, must be the state of that cause, which needs such miserable subtleties to support it!

Hon. Our Lord charged Peter to shew his love to him by feeding, first his lambs, and then twice, by feeding his sheep. Thus the children and the parents are to be cared for by the ministers as members of the Christian church. In this pastoral character our Lord is beautifully represented by the Prophet Isaiah. Chap. 40. 10."

Evan. By lambs, in both places, are meant, not infants who know not the Lord, and who are incapable of being fed spiritually; but young, feeble, and fearful believers. To suppose the contrary is mere fancy; and to argue from it as a self-evident truth, is too contemptibly weak to deserve a serious reply. Does Mr. S. produce any thing more from the ministry of John, or of our blessed Lord, in support of infant baptism?

Hon. I think not.

Evan. You believe Jesus Christ to have been a wife and gracious Legislator.

Hon. Certainly.

Evan. Is it not strange, then, if he had intended infant baptism to have been practised by his disciples, that in the whole course of his ministry, he should have given no plain and positive intimation of it?

Hon. I think it might reasonably have been expected that he would.

Evan. Has Mr. S. produced any such intimation?

Hon. I cannot say that he has.

Evan. How long do you suppose that the ministry

of John the baptist, and of our Lord taken together, continued?

Hon. About six or seven years.

Evan. If infant baptism had been then practised, numbers must have been, in that course of time, baptized. Is it not strange, then, that we meet not with a single example in the whole history?

Hon. I know not at present, how to account for it. I shall, probably, reconsider the subject, and hope to be led into the real Truth, but, I must for the present take my leave.

Evan. Farewell. May the Lord direct you in this, and in all things!

DIALOGUE V.

Hon. In our last conversation we particularly attended to the contents of Mr. S's *Second Letter*.—Let us now proceed to his *Third Letter*, in which he professedly enters on a brief consideration of baptism, as it was practised after the ascension of Christ, and as recorded in the acts of the Apostles.

Evan. What are the arguments you meet with in this part of his work ?

Hon. He begins with observing, that the commission, *Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ;* " Is so worded as to take in both parents and their children. For parents are capable of being taught, and then baptized ; and children are capable of being discipled by baptism, and then taught. The first word in the commission rendered *to teach*, signifies *to disciple*, or *to make disciples* ; and it is wisely and graciously put into this commission by our blessed Lord, that both parents and children might be, as they ever had been, received into the church together."

Evan. To a critical investigation of the Greek term, perhaps, neither my friend Honestus, Mr. S, nor myself may be competent. The learned Venema, a Pedobaptist, and whom I suppose to have been a much abler critic than either of us, says on the pas-

sage; "The word *Matheteuein* in the stile of the New Testament, does not signify barely to admit into a school and instruction; but to admit after the doctrine is believed, and after a previous subjection to the fundamental laws of the school." It is to *disciple*, then, by effectually teaching; and indeed, it is in this way only, that disciples can be made.

In this light it is evident, the term was used by our translators, though themselves were Pedobaptists. They have, therefore, rendered it to *teach*. That they were right in so doing, is evident from the parallel place (Mark 16. 16.) when, *Preach the Gospel*, answers to Matthew's, *Go teach*. This divine commission contains but one general direction for baptizing, without any distinction of persons. If, therefore, it authorized the baptizing of *any persons* without teaching, it would warrant the baptizing of *all*. For, of the distinction of parents and their children, and of the one being first taught and then baptized, the others being baptized first, and then taught, though plain enough in the pamphlet of Mr. S. there is not the least shadow in the text itself. Mr. S. therefore, is far from having proved, by the commission itself, a warrant to baptize untaught infants.

Hon. Mr. S. does not, I conceive, lay the stress of his argument upon the commission, considered simply by itself; but as considered in connection with Apostolic practice. "In the second chapter, of Acts, St. Peter adviseth the convinced Jews, to repent and be baptized every one of them, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and promises that they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, These things he enforces on them by declaring, that *the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even to as many*

as the Lord our God shall call. The promise here meant is the pardon of sin, and the gift of the holy spirit. This promise, the Apostle says, was to them; that is, made to them and to their children, as a part of God's visible church, and to all that are afar off; even to as many as the Lord our God shall call, or bring by the preaching of the word into his church, and to all the children of such disciples."

Evan. If, as Mr. S. says, the promise mean the pardon of sin, and the gift of the Holy Spirit; I cannot see how it can with truth, be said to belong to the children of Believers, as such, because many of them live and die without those blessings. By *children*, it is much more agreeable to understand *posterity*: like as, in that awful imprecation, (to which the Apostle probably referred). *His blood be upon us and our children*; and to consider the last clause of the text. *Even to as many as the Lord our God shall call*, as explanative of the whole. Thus understood, the passage is free from every difficulty, and consonant with other Apostolic addresses.—Such as Acts 13. 38, 39. *Be it known unto you, therefore, Men and Brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him ALL THAT BELIEVE are justified, &c.* In this view, it perfectly corresponds with the narration which follows: *Then they that gladly received the word were baptized.* The sacred historian informs us *who were baptized*; namely, those *who gladly received the word*. But there is not the least hint that their infant children were baptized with them. If you refer to Acts 8. 12. you will find a similar account.

Hon. Mr. S. mentions the Apostolic address to the Jews, Acts 3. 25. But what has been already said, with respect to the peculiar relation in which that nation, as such, stood to God; so far satisfies

me, that I shall not insist on what he argues from thence. To Matt. 8. 12, 13. 38. and Rom. 4. 11: he also refers; but these passages having been considered in a prior conversation, I proceed to what appears to be of more consequence; namely, "The households that are said to be baptized, we may consider the relation of these facts, as an historical accomplishment of the above words of St. Peter.—*The promise is to you and to your children, &c.*—The writer of the Acts informs us, that when Lydia and the jailor at Philippi, were baptized, their households, that is, their children were baptized with them."

Evan. Are these the exact words of Mr. S.?

Hon. Yes.

Evan. If not, I should probably have charged you with a gross mistake, in saying, the writer of the Acts informs us, that the children of Lydia, and of the gaoler, were baptized with them. There is not the least intimation of any children being in their households, and consequently none of their being baptized. I have, myself, lately baptized one whole household, and all the younger part of another; yet you will not infer from thence, that I baptized infants.

Hon. "The household of Stephanus was baptized by the Apostle Paul; it is very unlikely that three households should be without children."

Evan. "Very unlikely"—So, then, the right of infants to baptism, a positive ordinance of Jesus Christ, is to rest upon conjecture! Feeble basis, indeed! But why so very unlikely? I am of opinion that if you were to go from house to house, through this town, you would find a majority of the families, without any children in them so young as to be, on that account, incapable of giving credible

evidence of converting grace. I am certain it is so in the neighbourhood in which we now are. Why, then, should it be thought unlikely that three such families should be found in sacred history? Or that, at a time of such an outpouring of the spirit as then attended the ministration of the word, some whole families should be spiritually born at once? We look for the time when a NATION shall be born in a day.

Hon. You are not able to prove that there were no infants in those families.

Evan. Supposing I were not, what then? Must the right of infants to baptism necessarily follow? This is a very different mode of reasoning, from that used by an inspired writer. Heb. 7. 14. *Of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood.* The Apostle argues the exclusion of the tribe of Judah from the priesthood, not from express prohibition, or specifically exclusive narration; but from *nothing having been spoken* by the Legislator concerning it. So, in the matter before us. If nothing be spoken, (which is certainly the fact) relative to the right of infants to baptism; it is, consequently, without any divine warrant. I will add, if it could be proved that there were infants in either of the before-mentioned families; still it would not, even then follow, that they were baptized; for it is neither uncommon, nor unscriptural, for a house or household to be represented as doing that which the proper subjects did; though not every individual in the family: Thus it is said, 1 Sam. 1. 21. *That the man Elkanah and ALL HIS HOUSE, went up, to offer unto the Lord the yearly sacrifice.* Yet, we afterwards find, that neither the child Samuel, nor Hannah his mother went up.

Hon. I wish, however, to examine, what was the state of the households referred to, if any thing from the sacred pages can be admitted that will throw any light on the subject.

Evan. With respect to Lydia and her house, there is not the least intimation of her being a married woman. Nay, the contrary is strongly implied, in the manner she is spoken of as the head of the house. She was besides, for the purposes of trade at a distance from the usual place of her abode. And when the Apostle afterwards entered her house, it is said that he *comforted the brethren*. It should seem, therefore, that her family consisted of persons properly denominated brethren, and who were capable of being comforted. From all these circumstances, the probability, to say the least, is against there being any infants in her family. Relative to the jailor and his household, we are informed that Paul and Silas *spoke unto him and to ALL THAT WERE IN HIS HOUSE, and he rejoiced BELIEVING IN GOD WITH ALL HIS HOUSE*. Nothing but fondness for a particular hypothesis could induce any person to suppose that those expressions are applicable to infants.

Of the household of Stephanus we read, that they were *the first fruits of Achaia*. In other words, those in that country whom God had been graciously pleased first to call by the ministry of the word there. We are further told, that they *addicted themselves to the ministry of the Saints*. Such households we should be happy to baptize, and receive into our churches. On the whole, nothing appears from the scripture account of those households, that lays any foundation for the practice of infant baptism.

Hon. What I have mentioned is, I believe, the whole of what Mr. S. produces from the history of

the Apostles, to support infant baptism. There are however, some reflections in his third chapter, which I wish to be noticed.

Evan. What are they?

Hon. He says, that "An Antipedobaptist family is a singular household. The father and mother have received the seal of God's covenant, but withhold it from their children. Their offspring remain *unmarked* as the lambs of Christ's flock and children of his kingdom; and unsealed as the children of the covenant of grace; and, in a religious sense, with respect to such connections, and as far as their parents power can reach, they neither belong to God's church in Earth or Heaven. This is a treatment of children by their parents, that merits very serious reflections." What say you, Sir, to this.

Evan. I say, that unless Mr. S. can prove that the children of Christians are, *as such*; in the covenant of grace; that baptism is a seal of that covenant; that it is a mark by which children are distinguished as the lambs of Christ's flock; or that they are at all benefited by it; (which I am satisfied he never can do) that it is all empty declamation, and can only influence young and weak persons (to use his own phraseology) who are incapable of distinguishing declamation from argument.

Hon. The faith that is necessary for baptism in adults, Mr. S. says, "Is only the faith of profession;" and; "no more than a belief in certain propositions respecting Christ.—Such a professional faith was all that was necessary to become a Christian, or to be received into a visible church.

Evan. The faith which should precede baptism, is that faith which is connected with salvation. This is evident from Mark 16. 16. *He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.* A credible profession of

this faith, is what the ministers of Christ are to require, prior to baptism. Thus Philip to the Eunuch : *If thou believest with ALL THINE HEART, thou mayest.* With THE HEART *man believeth unto righteousness.*" Rom. 10. 10. The idea, that a mere assent to *certain propositions* respecting Christ, and a merely professional faith, are all that is necessary to become a Christian, or to be received into the visible church, is in my apprehension big with danger. — Independent of the controversy about baptism, I am sincerely sorry to see it propagated, where I trust experimental religion, *has been much insisted on and cherished.*

Hon. Simon Magus was baptized without saving faith.

Evan. True. He hypocritically professed that faith to which he was a stranger ; being *in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.* Hypocrites may impose on the ministers and churches of Christ, so as to get admission to all the external privileges of the church ; but it by no means follows, that they have a legal right, either to baptism, or the Lord's Supper. When their hypocrisy is discovered, they are to be ejected ; as, doubtless, Simon Magus was.

Hon. " If it were a saving faith, or the faith of the heart," that is necessary to baptism ; " there must be more than inspired men to minister baptism truly ; inspired men having been deceived in administering the ordinance, if things are as you say."

Evan. Where a credible profession of repentance towards God, and of faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, is made, the Christian minister is authorized to baptize the subject, without assuming to himself the prerogative of searching the heart. That we are (in common with our brethren) liable to be

deceived by hypocrites we know. But are we, thence to infer, that we are to have no regard to *experimental* religion, in candidates for baptism and church fellowship; but that a bare profession of a notional faith in some scripture facts is all we are to look for? Rather, surely, the existence of such awful cases should put us the more on our guard, lest we should unhappily encourage carnal confidence in those who are destitute of that essential change of heart, without which no man can see the kingdom of God.

Hon. But, then, you are liable to put the seal of God to blanks, as well as your opponents.

Evan. We do not pretend to put the seal of God to any persons. To seal persons is God's work, not our's; and it is effected, not by baptism, but by the gracious work of his spirit upon the heart. Eph. 1, 13.

Hon. I shall not trouble you farther, at present. It is time for me to withdraw.

Evan. I will not detain you longer than just to observe; that the Acts of the Apostles contain a history of primitive Christians and Churches, for about thirty years: and yet your author has not been able to produce a single example of the practice he contends for throughout the whole of it. This is strange, indeed; if, as he supposes, infant baptism, was universally practised by primitive Christians. Farewell.

DIALOGUE VI.

Hon. I fear intruding on the time and patience of my friend, by my frequent visits for conversation on the subject of baptism. We shall, however, be likely soon to come to a close, so far as it respects the proper subjects of the ordinance. In the *Fourth Letter* of Mr. S. he proposes "to consider what appears in the Epistolary writings of the New Testament in favour of infants right to church privileges, and consequently to baptism."

Evan. "The right of infants to church privileges, and consequently to baptism." What church privileges does Mr. S. admit infants to, or do they enjoy, above the children of Baptist parents? A merely nominal faith, and an exterior church relation, it appears to me, are all they gain. Let us, however consider what he says.

Hon. He refers to Rom. 11, "There the Apostle treats of the church of God under the similitude of a good olive tree. The root is Abraham; the stock Isaac and Jacob; the Jewish people are the branches of the tree; the whole tree is denominated holy, from its covenant relation to Abraham, as the believing and circumcised root of these branches. By the change made when the church became Christian, there was no alteration in the root of the tree. The grafting of Gentiles into this tree, was by a profession of faith, and by baptism, both of believers and their households. By this they obtained a fede-

jal holiness, and became the children of the covenant, and of the kingdom of God."

Even I have carefully read the chapter, and cannot find either infants, or baptism so much as once mentioned in it. This is strange, indeed, if the Apostle intended to assert their right to baptism. By the *good Olive Tree*, the Apostle does not, in my judgment, intend the national church of the Jews; but a special people among them, whom God foreknew. (Verse 2) *A remnant, according to the election of grace*. (Verse 5,) *who stand by Faith* (Verse 20). What he has in view is, evidently, to caution believing Gentiles against self exaltation, from the privileges they enjoyed; and against despising, or contemptuously treating the Jews. To this end, he argues, that the church of God had been formerly confined to them; that the election of grace had in past ages been found principally among them; that at the then present time, notwithstanding the unbelief and rejection of the bulk of the nation, there was a remnant of the elect among them, who were called by Divine Grace and embraced the Gospel. Those, the Apostle denominates *first fruits*; and considers their conversion as an earnest of the accomplishment of divine purposes in the conversion of that people in the latter day. He further considers those blessings which the believing Gentiles enjoyed, as flowing to them in the line of Abraham; whom he therefore represents as the *root* that bore them, and of whom, he says elsewhere, *as concerning the flesh, Christ came*. All this is very suitable to the Apostle's design, as before stated. But what it has to do with the supposed right of infants to baptism, I cannot conceive.

Hon. But if you consider the chapter, together with 1 Cor. 7. 14. "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife, and the unbe-

believing wife is sanctified by the believing husband : elsewhere your children unclean, but now are they holy ;" you may, perhaps, see something more convincing.

Evan. Mr. S. I know, argues from those passages, as if they were closely connected. They, however, not only stand in different epistles, but were written with a view to different subjects.—Therefore, to argue from them as if they stood in a connected chain, is but to bewilder and mislead.

Hon. Mr. S. says, " The professional holiness enjoyed by the branches of the good olive-tree, was deemed sufficient to sanctify the children of a believing man or woman, who was married to an unbeliever, or heathen ; so far as to give the children a right to baptism and church privileges."

Evan. How does this appear?

Hon. " They are *holy* ; that is connected with the Christian parent, in covenant relation to God."

Evan. If the children are said to be *holy*, the unbelieving parent is said, to be *sanctified*, or made holy. Therefore, if the right of the children to baptism and church privileges, be inferred from the use of the term *holy* the right of the unbelieving parent must be inferred too. The sense in which any single term is used by any writer, in any particular connection, must certainly be best determined by examining what was the design of the writer in that connection.

Hon. What do you suppose to be the object the Apostle has in view, in the text under consideration?

Evan. Not the right of children to baptism and church privileges, about which there is not the least hint given in the whole context : but the lawfulness of believing men or women continuing in the mar-

riage relation with their yet unbelieving husbands or wives. See from verse 12. to 16. *If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him; LET HIM NOT PUT HER AWAY, &c.* Their mutual contract had so sanctified them to each other, as to render their matrimonial commerce lawful, notwithstanding the conversion of one party, and the remaining unbelief of the other. The Apostle adds, *else were your children unclean; (that is, bastards) but now are they holy;* that is legitimate, as being the fruit of lawful union.

Hon. Mr. S. says, " This is darkening the sense of a most plain text of scripture : The parents are denominated husband and wife ; and in such a case we were in no want of an Apostle to inform us, whether the children were illegitimate or not. But it was a matter of moment to be assured, in what relation the children of such parents stood to the church ; that is, whether the parents should be so blessed to each other, as to entitle their children to the privileges of the church : And it is with pleasure we find, by a divine mandate, that they are entitled to them."

Evan. Mr. S. then, sees that plainly contained in the text, of which I cannot discern the smallest trace. He can discern a *divine mandate* for the admission of children, where there is no *mandate* at all respecting them ; but only a simple declaration concerning their state.

The observation of *Mr. S.* That the parents are denominated husband and wife ; and in such a case we were in no want of an Apostle to inform us whether the children were illegitimate or not ; is very weak. For it is evident some of the Corinthians thought, that the conversion of one party to the Christian faith, rendered the continuance of the

matrimonial connection with the other, remaining an Heathen, unlawful. Consequently, that it dissolved it. Whatever, therefore, we may want, it is plain that they wanted the testimony of an inspired Apostle to satisfy them that the relation, and the obligations arising from it, still continued; and that the fruit of it was legitimate.

Hon. " It is remarkable, that in the several exhortations which are given in the Epistles to the children of believers, there is not one hint to be found, expressing any desire for them to seek to be baptized, that they might enjoy full church privileges with their parents.

Evan. It is at least as remarkable, and on the principles of Mr. S. I think, much more so, that the children of believers are never, as such, exhorted to come to the Lord's Table. If, therefore, from the silence of the scripture in the one case, he can infer infant baptism; from the same silence, in the other, he ought to infer, infant communion. To me, however, there appears nothing remarkable in either case; they not having any right as the children of believing parents, either to the one ordinance or to the other. When called by divine grace, they are included in all the directions and exhortations, respecting those ordinances, given to penitent sinners, who believe in the Lord Jesus.

Hon. I have not much more to say on this part of the subject. I would observe, however, that the persons addressed by John (1 Epist. 2. 11, 12.) as little children, are considered by Mr. S. as children in years, and as making a part of the church. These little children are said to *know the father*, and to have *their sins forgiven them*. From thence he infers that they had been baptized in their infancy; for forgiveness of sins, and illumination of mind, were

generally attached to baptism in the primitive times."

Evan. To what lengths are even good men sometimes carried, by a fondness for hypothesis! To suppose that the Apostle intends any persons, not really the subjects of converting grace, whatever their age might be, by those to whom he says, *Ye have known the Father.—Your sins are forgiven,*—is absurd. And to suppose them so addressed, merely because they had been, either sprinkled, or immersed, in their infancy, is trifling with immortal concerns in an awful manner, indeed! The Baptists are frequently charged with laying an undue stress on the ordinance of baptism, and with an intemperate zeal for it. But what would you have thought, if you had heard me talk of *the forgiveness of sins, and illumination of mind, as attached to baptism*; and of persons baptized being, on that account, to be "addressed as invested with the privilege of remission of sins?"

Hon. I should have thought you justly censurable, as putting an external rite in the room of the blood of Jesus, and the work of the Spirit of God. But though you do not go those lengths, yet, does not your conduct in refusing all but those of your own sect a place at the Lord's table, give just occasion for a serious charge of bigotry?

Evan. No: at least, not on the principles of Mr. S; who evidently considers baptism as an initiating ordinance into the church of Christ. Consequently, no unbaptized person, however worthy of esteem in other respects, can have a right to the special privileges of the church. The enquiry, then, is, what is baptism? Not now to insist on the mode, (which I suppose you intend as the subject of some future conversation) we consider it as essential to the putting

on Christ by baptism, that it be the person's own act; and so the answer of a good conscience towards God. We believe, not only, that our blessed Lord has instituted two positive ordinances; but that he has also appointed baptism to precede the Lord's Supper. We do not think ourselves at liberty to dispense with the order appointed by our Lord; or to substitute an invention of men in the room of an ordinance of his. Consequently, though we esteem and love all who bear the image of our common Lord, yet we dare not admit them to the special privileges of a congregated church, except in his own way.

Hon. I do not recollect any thing more in the pamphlet of Mr. S, relative to the proper subjects of baptism, of importance enough to call for particular discussion.

Evan. Does not my friend, Honestus, feel a want of conclusive evidence, demonstrating the right of infants to baptism? Has any thing been produced, except far fetched, intricate, inconclusive reasonings, and mere conjectures? Are these sufficient to satisfy the serious enquirer after the truth, respecting a positive ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Hon. I cannot say that I am satisfied with the evidence he produces.

Evan. The way to obtain real satisfaction, respecting the proper subjects of baptism, is to attend to what the sacred scriptures say in direct reference to that ordinance. Permit me, before we part, to set that before you, so far as relates to the proper subjects.

In Matt. 3. 5. 6. 7. 8. we have an account of the persons baptized by John the Baptist. *Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him*

in Jordan CONFESSING THEIR SINS, But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our Father, &c.

In this account, there is no intimation of any infants being baptized; but rather that the persons baptized by John, were such as attended his ministry—persons who professed repentance, and whose profession was credible. For where the illustrious Baptist had reason to doubt its sincerity, he refused to baptize the persons. The plea of carnal descent, even from Abraham himself, was rejected by him. But if baptism had come in the room of circumcision, as Mr. S. maintains, descent from Abraham would have been a valid plea. In the whole of this first account of baptism, you cannot but see, that there is nothing in favour of the baptism of infants; but that all the circumstances make strongly against it.

Correspondent with the above relation by Matthew, is the account given by John. *They came and were baptized of him. Joh 3. 33. Behold the same baptizeth and all MEN COME unto him. Verse 26.* In Joh 4. 1. we read of our Lord baptizing, by his disciples. *When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus MADE and baptized more disciples than John.* The persons baptized were disciples; not discipled by baptism, but first made disciples. That is, instructed, by teaching, in the leading principles of the kingdom of God, and then baptized.

Perfectly agreeable to the conduct of our Lord and of his forerunner, is the commission he gave

to his disciples after his resurrection. *Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* Matt. 28. 19. *Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel unto every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, &c.* Mark 16. 15, 16. These passages we have had occasion to notice before. I shall, therefore, only remark, that our Lord's commission, as illustrated by the conduct of divinely inspired men, is, with respect to baptism, our only warrant and rule. That the commission makes no distinction relative to different kinds of subjects, infants and adults, but that it respects the subjects of baptism in general. These are described as taught; as having heard the Gospel, so as to believe it. For the baptism of such, and only of such, we have from the commission a divine warrant. I would here remind you of a passage or two in sacred writ. For instance: *Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.* Prov. 30. 6. *In vain do they worship me, teaching, for doctrines, the commandments of men.* Matt. 15. 9. Consonant with the commission and example of the Divine Master, was the conduct of his faithful servants. On the day of Pentecost, Peter boldly preached Jesus to the assembled people. They heard, were pricked in their heart, and cried out, *what shall we do?* Then Peter said unto them, *Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you and to your children (or posterity) and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call. Then they that gladly received his word, were baptized, &c.* Acts 2. 38—41. Preaching, accompanied with the heart-searching power of the Holy Ghost, preceded baptism. Those who were pricked in their

heart, and who gladly received the word, are the described subjects of baptism, nor is there the least intimation of any other persons being admitted to that ordinance. The argument of Mr. S from a part of this context, has been before considered, and therefore need not now to be repeated.

When persecution dispersed the disciples from Jerusalem, they that were scattered abroad, went every where, preaching the word. Philip went down to Samaria, and preached Christ to them.—The people heard with attention, and received the word in faith, and with great joy; and *when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women.* Acts 8. 12. Here, again, agreeably to the commission, preaching preceded faith; and faith preceded baptism. In speaking of the subjects baptized, the inspired historian expressly mentions *both men and women.*—How natural for him to have added, “with their children,” had it been the fact? and thus, by a faithful narration he would have prevented a controversy which has been maintained for ages. He notices children on an occasion far less important, Acts 21. 5. In the same chapter we have an account of the baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch.—Philip preached to him Jesus. The word being accompanied with enlightening and heart renewing grace; coming to a certain water, he eagerly asks, *What doth hinder me to be baptized?* Philip said, *If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.* A profession of faith, yea, of heart faith, (and you know that with the heart man believeth unto righteousness) was positively required prior to baptism. The solemn profession was made; he was baptized; and he went on his way rejoicing. Acts 8. 35—39.

Perfectly consonant with the examples already mentioned, is the case of Cornelius, of his kinsmen, and of his friends. To them Peter preached *peace by Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all*. The word was owned and blessed of God to them. Their hearts were purified by faith; and the Holy Ghost fell on them which heard the word. *I then answered Peter, can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus* Acts 10. 36.—48. The case of Lydia, and of the jailor, has been already considered.

In perfect consistency with the above, the same inspired writer relates the success of Paul's ministry at Corinth, when he says, *And many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized*.

At Ephesus, Paul found certain disciples who had been baptized by John, to whom he said; "*John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him that should come after him; that is, on Christ Jesus* When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." Acts 19. 4, 5. Mr S. refers to this passage, to prove, that John's baptism, and Christian baptism, were different; supposing those persons to have been rebaptized by Paul. To me the fact appears to have been otherwise. The verses which I have quoted, contain Paul's narration of what was done under John's ministry. It is not till the following verse, that the action of Paul himself is related: *And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, &c* In this passage John's baptism is called, *The Baptism of Repentance*. Infants, therefore, could not be the subjects of it. We do not expect repentance of them. Those whom he baptized were penitent sinners; and whom he directed to Jesus Christ.

These are, if I mistake not, all the examples of baptism, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. You see, that they uniformly present us with the idea of teaching, and of a credible profession of faith: not is there the least intimation of any deviation; no, not in a single instance.

Bear with me, my friend while I add: The ends designed to be answered by baptism, are such as necessarily exclude infants. Baptism was not intended to make persons "members of Christ, the children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven." No; that is effected by nothing short of the sovereign and efficacious grace of God. But it is designed, first, as a solemn act of sacred worship, expressive of faith in, and a reverential regard to the Holy Trinity. *Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* Agreeably to which the Apostle says to the Galatians; *As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.* Gal. 3. 27. That is, you have put him on in a way of solemn profession. You have in baptism, professed your faith in him, and solemnly engaged in his service.

Secondly, As an expression of faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of our blessed Lord; and as an emblem of our death to sin, and of our rising again to newness of life. Rom. 6, 4, 5. Col. 2. 12. Of all which, Infants are incapable; and are therefore, improper subjects.

Thirdly, It is said to be, in the person baptized, *The answer of a good conscience towards God.* But how this can be applicable to Infants, who have no consciousness of the matter, I cannot conceive. Those, whose consciences are sprinkled with the blood of Christ; whose hearts are purified by faith; who discern their duty, and do from love obey; to them,

and them only, can baptism be *the answer of a good conscience towards God.*

Hon. I must confess myself convinced, that penitent sinners, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are the only proper subjects of Baptism; and that the ministers of Christ have no authority to baptize any but those who make a credible profession of those things. Consequently, that the Baptism of Infants has no warrant from the word of God.

I shall request your attention to what has been said respecting the mode: but this must be at some other time. For the present, I bid you farewell.

DIALOGUE VII.

Hon. I now must request your attention, friend Evangelicus, to what Mr. S. has said respecting the mode of baptizing; about which, he says, "there has been a great waste of time and zeal,"

Evan. It seems, however, that he was willing to increase that waste, by contributing his portion toward it. But what, in the account of Mr. S. is baptism?

Hon. "The use of water in the name of the Holy Trinity—Whether the subject be plunged in, or washed, or sprinkled with water, it is equally Christian Baptism."

Evan. One administrator, then, may immerse in water, in the name of the Holy Trinity; for it is allowed to be Christian Baptism. Another may chuse to pour water on the head. A third to sprinkle the face. A fourth, perhaps, may choose to sprinkle the breast, or knees, or toes, &c. and yet any of those acts, it should seem according to our author, must be Christian Baptism too. Can you really believe, that the divine Legislator has instituted an ordinance, the manner of performing which, is so exceedingly vague? Or is it a fact that the enacting term, in this solemn Divine Law, is so very ambiguous?

Hon. The true meaning of the enacting term, *baptize*, must certainly be of great importance in this controversy. Can you give me any information on

that subject? Mr. S. I must confess, appears to me to evade it, in a manner that does not please me.

Evan. I will give you that information in the words of Pedobaptists themselves; from whom the force of evidence has produced ample concessions in favour of truth, though contrary to their own practice.

Luther, the great reformer, thus expresses himself, "The term Baptism is a Greek word. It may be rendered *a dipping*, when we dip something into water, that it may be entirely covered with water. And though that custom be quite abolished among the generality (for neither do they entirely dip children, but only sprinkle them with a little water) nevertheless, they ought to be wholly immersed, and presently drawn out again. For the etymology of the word seems to require it." In Dr Du Veil, on Acts 8, 38.

The laborious and learned Calvin says; "The word Baptize, signifies to immerse, and the rite of immersion was observed in the ancient church."

Diodati: "Baptized, viz. plunged in water, in *baptism*; being dipped in water, according to the ancient ceremony." Annotat. on Mat. 3, 6. Rom.

6:4. Witsius, "It cannot be denied that the word *Baptein*, and *Baptizein*, is to plunge, to dip."

I select these from numerous other testimonies of the same nature, because they are the testimonies of men whose character and writings, I know, you highly and justly esteem. To them I will add the testimony of a celebrated modern critic, Principal Campbel, "The word *Baptizein*, both in sacred authors, and classical, signifies *to dip*, *to plunge*, *to immerse*, and was rendered by Tertullian, the oldest of the Latin Fathers, *tingere*, the term used for dying cloth, which was by immersion. It is always con-

Armed suitably to this meaning. *Notes*, on Matthew, annexed to his translation of the four Gospels, Vol. II. page 360. These declarations made by competent judges, who were themselves in the contrary practice; must, surely, be deemed decisive.—In all that I have read on the subject, which has not been inconsiderable, I never yet have met with an example of the use of the Greek term, produced from either sacred or classical Greek authors, wherein immersion was not implied.

Hon. Mr. S. produces some out of the New Testament, from which he argues the contrary. For instance, the Apostle's speaking of *divers washings*, or *baptisms*, as it is in the original, Heb. 9. 10.

Evan. Under the Levitical Law, there were divers baptisms, or immersions, of divers things, on divers occasions; as of persons, garments, &c. to which the Apostle there alludes.

Hon. The words of John, "I baptize you with water; but he, that is Christ, shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Mr. S. considers as in favour of the application of water to the subject.

Evan. He knows, I presume, that the Greek particle, which is there used, may at least with as much propriety be translated *in* as *with*; and that it actually is most usually so rendered by our translators, when used in connection with the word baptize. His reasoning, therefore, has no weight. A learned Pedobaptist thus expresses himself on the text.

"Baptism in the Holy Spirit, is immersion into the pure waters of the Holy Spirit, or a rich and abundant communication of his gifts. For he on whom the Holy Spirit is poured out, is, as it were, immersed into him; *Baptismos en puri*, baptism in

fire, is a figurative expression, and signifies casting into a flame, which like water flows far and wide; such as the flame that consumed Jerusalem. The thing commanded by our Lord, is *baptism*, immersion into the water." Gurtlerus. *Instit. Theol.*

Hon. "The Israelites were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They walked on dry land while they were sprinkled with rain from the cloud, or with water from the sea."

Evan. So says Mr. S. But if waters from the cloud and from the sea sprinkled the numerous host, passing through the wide chasm that was miraculously opened for them; they must have been much incommoded in their march, and could scarcely with propriety have been said to have walked on dry land. The use of the term *baptized*, by the Apostle, is figurative. The Israelites, when they went down into the channel of the sea, the waters of which were a wall to them on each side, and the cloud overshadowed them; were, figuratively speaking, immersed in the cloud and in the sea. That they were sprinkled at all, is highly improbable.

Hon. Our Lord says, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, &c. The truth of these words was fully set forth when he was wet with blood, when he sweat in the garden, and when his blood was poured from his wounds on the cross. He was not plunged in blood, such an idea is unbecoming the subject."

Evan. The sufferings of our Lord are with much more propriety represented by an immersion in water, than by the sprinkling a few drops of water on the face, *I am come* (says David as his type) *into deep waters, where the flood overflaw me.* Psal. 69. 2. *Deep calleth unto Deep, at the noise of thy water shouts; all thy waves and thy billows have gone over me.* Psal.

42. 7. He was indeed immersed in woe. These instances, therefore, illustrate and confirm the natural meaning of the word, as signifying to immerse instead of proving the contrary.

Hon. The numbers baptized by John, and on the day of Pentecost, are considered by Mr S. as inimical to plunging, as the mode of baptism. How could such numbers be baptized that way, in so short a time, without confusion? How could they be provided with suitable changes of garments, &c.?

Evan. If historic facts are to be denied because of some supposed difficulty attending them, there will be no knowing where to stop. The fact of Abraham circumcising himself, his son Ishmael and all his male domestics (He had three hundred of them trained to war) in the self same day: (Gen. 17. 23) Or of Solomon's offering in sacrifice twenty and two thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep, at the dedication of the temple; (2 Chron. 7. 3) might easily be in this manner denied. But, with respect to those baptized by John, no particular number is specified, nor any time mentioned in which they were baptized. Respecting the three thousand (mentioned Acts 2. 41) it no way necessarily follows, from the words of the inspired historian, that they were all baptized in one day. Convinced of sin, gladly receiving the word, and cleaving to the preachers of it, they might with propriety be said to have been added to them, (that is to the number of the disciples) though they had not all been baptized in the same day. But supposing that they were; yet, as there were twelve Apostles, and seventy disciples authorized to preach and baptize, the difficulty, at

least with respect to the administrators, totally vanishes. With respect to change of raiment, as each person had but to provide for him or herself, and that in a place where bathing on religious accounts, was so frequent as at Jerusalem, and at a time when they had favour with all the people, (Verse 47.) the difficulty could not be considerable.

Nor would the difficulty be removed by a change of mode. A solemn profession of repentance and faith, which requires much more time than the act of baptizing, being pre-requisite to that act, and as the same form of words must have been pronounced, there could be scarcely any difference in point of time. I might add, that history gives us authentic accounts of greater numbers having been baptized in one day, when the mode most certainly was immersion.

Hon. We read nothing of a change of raiment, which yet, according to your mode, must have been necessary.

Evan. Nor of any knife used by Abraham, in that instance of circumcision, which I have already mentioned. It would have been inconsistent with the designed brevity of the sacred historians, for them to have particularly related circumstances, necessarily understood without such a particular narration. There are however, allusions to the change of raiment, on those solemn occasions; which may, perhaps, fall in our way to notice, before we have done with the subject.

Hon. Mr. S. represents baptizing by plunging, as terrifying and indecent; especially in the case of women, and as contrary to the mild genius of the Christian religion. I do not think it necessary to use *verbatim*, his expressions,

Evan. Nor do I. They favor strongly of that spirit of bigotry, which he would charge upon his brethren who differ from him in this matter.

Positive ordinances from God are not to be moulded according to the varying human notions of the agreeable and the decent. If there be any thing in immersion, that calls for the exercise of some self-denial; it is but agreeable to our Lord's injunction. *If any man will be my disciple let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.* Persons, without hesitation, bathe for health or pleasure.— Surely, then, the Christian should not hesitate to obey the command, and follow the example of Jesus Christ. As for the charge of indecency, it is totally groundless. Mr. S. probably never saw a person baptized by immersion. I have baptized many, have attended at the baptizing of many more; and have never yet observed a single circumstance, that could give just occasion of offence to the chastest eye. On the contrary, those opportunities have been found, by the congregations in general, solemn and edifying; accompanied, I will venture to say, with an evident fulfilment of the gracious promise, which our Divine Master has been pleased to connect with the commission to baptize; *Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*

Hon. Mr. S. notices, as what ought not to be depended on, that “some devotees have said that while they were present at a plunging, they thought themselves almost in Heaven.”

Evan. In a former publication he holds up the Baptist as persons of much light, and little heat, (large windows and little stoves.) It seems, however, that with him, their character is now changed. They are transformed into a set of enthusiastic devotees; whose intemperate zeal disturbs societies; and who

are so led away by the strength of their own passions, as to be incompetent judges of their own feelings. I should think, however, that they may fairly be allowed to judge for themselves, of what they feel of the presence and blessing of God attending them, in what they believe to be the path of duty, as well as their brethren of a different persuasion.

Hon. Allowing that, yet no great stress ought to be laid on those feelings, as determining what is truth.

Evant. By no means. *To the Law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this rule, it is because there is no light in them.* If you please, I will state the real ground of our faith and practice, in this respect; and if whilst I am so doing, any thing occur to your mind, from Mr. S's pamphlet, which you wish to mention, we will consider it as we proceed.

Hon. I shall willingly attend to what you have to say.

Evant. We baptize by immersion, because we believe it to be *that*, and not any thing else, which our Lord hath enjoined. I have already produced the testimony of several most respectable Protestant Divines to this purpose. I will now add the testimony of a Popish Bishop, who may in this cause, be allowed to give impartial evidence.

Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux: "To baptize, signifies to plunge, as is granted by all the world."

Of an impartial Quaker: "Such as baptize or sprinkle infants, have no command from, nor example among the Apostles, nor first primitive Christians for so doing. The ceremony of John's ministration, according to divine institution, was by dipping, plunging, or overwhelming their bodies in water; as Scapula and Stephens, two great masters

in the Greek Tongue, testify; as also Grotius, Pasor, Vossius, Minceus, Leigh, Casaubon, Bucer, Bullinger, Zanchy, Spanhemius, Rogers, Taylor, Hammond, Calvin, Piscator, Aquinas, Scotus. As for *Sprinkling*, the Greeks call it *Rhantismos*; which I render *Rhantism*: for it is as proper to call sprinkling *rhantism*, as it is to call dipping *baptism*. This Linguists cannot be ignorant of, that dipping and sprinkling are expressed by several words, both in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. If sprinkling had been of Divine Institution, the Greeks had their *Rhantismos*; but as dipping was the Institution, they used *Baptismos*; so maintained the purity and propriety of their language, Thomas Lawson, *Baptismalogia*, p. 117, 118, 119.

London Reviewers: "That the Letter of the Scripture is in favour of the Baptists (or, as they are still absurdly called Anabaptists) cannot, without evasion and equivocation, be denied."

Numerous other testimonies, equally explicit, might be produced, but these, for the present, may suffice.

As the Quaker justly observes, if sprinkling had been the mode, it would have been properly expressed by the Greek *Rhantismos*; by which for example; the Apostle repeatedly expresses that act, Heb. 9, 19, 21. That surely would have been the term used, and not *Baptismos*; which from the united testimony of such unexceptionable witnesses, signifies *Immersion*.

With the proper signification of the enacting term, the Scripture History of Baptismal Facts, perfectly agrees. For instance, places of administration, as the River Jordan. *Were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.* Matt. 3, 6.—13. *Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there.* A certain water; *See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be*

baptized. Acts 8. 36. All this, you must perceive, perfectly agrees with immersion, as the mode; but is hard to account for indeed, if sprinkling be baptism. If so, why were such places chosen for baptizing? Change the term, and read, if you please, *sprinkled*, or *poured*, of him in Jordan. John was *sprinkling*, or *pouring*, in Enon, because there was *much water there*; and they came and were *sprinkled*, or *poured* of him. See, here is water what doth hinder me to be *poured*. The absurdity is such as cannot but strike the mind. If sprinkling had been the mode, John needed not to have chosen a river, or a place of much water, for that purpose. A little water might have sufficed to sprinkle thousands. But then, as the learned Selden observes, respecting the modern practice in England, he would have baptized his own fingers rather than the subjects, "In England, of late years, (he saith) I have ever thought the Parson baptized his own fingers rather than the child."

Nor need the Eunuch to have gone down into a certain water; for, as a traveller in those desert and sandy parts, he must have had water with him abundantly more than sufficient for the purpose of sprinkling or of pouring.

But, read *immerse*, (the true translation of the Greek baptize) and the propriety is evident. They were *IMMERSED* of John in Jordan. John was *IMMERSED* in Enon, near to Salim, because there was *much water there*; and they came and were *IMMERSED* of him. See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be *IMMERSED*? I will venture to say, that not a single example can be produced from the sacred pages, where the word *immerse* might not with evident propriety be used in the place of the untranslated Greek baptize.

With this, also, specified circumstances agree. Persons baptized are said to *come to the water, to go down into it, to be baptized in it, and to come up out of it.* Suppose you were to hear of me, as preaching and baptizing in some foreign land; that I chose, for baptism, a place of much water; went down with the persons to be baptized into the water; baptized them in the river, &c. Without knowing any thing farther of me; what, in the name of common sense, would you conclude, but that I baptized by immersion? Are such places chosen for the purpose of sprinkling? or do such circumstances attend the practice? you know the contrary.

Hon. I remember to have read, or heard, that Joh. 3. 23. should be rendered, *many waters*; that is, rivulets of water; which might be needful for the refreshment of the people, and of their cattle, though not for the act of baptizing.

Evan. The learned Dr. Doddridge says; "Nothing, surely, can be more evident, than that *polla udata, many waters*, signifies a large quantity of water; it being sometimes used for the Euphrates, Jer. 51. 13. Septuagint." To suppose a place of much water chosen for the refreshment of the people, rather than for the act expressly specified, is mere evasion. Do we ever read of John, of our Lord, or of his Apostles, *preaching* in any place, because there was a great quantity of water there?

Hon. I remember, also, to have heard, that the prepositions translated *to, in, into*; might be rendered, *at, by, with, or near*.

Evan. The same criticism, my friend, would keep the wicked out of hell, and the saints out of heaven. That the Greek particles may, in some connections,

be so rendered, is allowed ! But that they might with propriety be so rendered, in the connection wherein they stand in the passages referred to ; is a proposition which the agreement of all translations of the sacred scriptures, ancient, or modern, at least that I have ever seen or heard of contradicts.

Hon. You urge the import of the enacting term, and corresponding facts respecting baptism ; and I acknowledge, that I feel the arguments strongly in your favour. But if the design of the ordinance be such as is better answered by sprinkling, or pouring, it must considerably enervate the force of your reasoning. “ Mr. S. says ; “ Either pouring water on, or sprinkling the subject with it, best represents the thing signified by baptism ; that is, a being baptized with the Holy Spirit ; whereas plunging has no familiarity with it. Pouring out on a person the Holy Ghost, is a baptizing with the spirit that accords with our understandings ; but a being plunged into the spirit, is a sentiment that it must be difficult for even a plunger to adopt.”

Evan. My Friend anticipates my design, which was to consider what is represented in baptism, and to shew from the sacred scriptures, that this confirms what I have already said respecting the mode.

We will forgive Mr. S. his pun on the word *plunge*, with only observing, That baptism is *immersion*. He says, that the thing signified by baptism is a being baptized with the Holy Spirit. This, however, he has not proved. But granting it for the present, what the scriptures intend by a being baptized with, or in the Holy Spirit, is that plenitude of Divine Influence with which the disciples were favoured on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2. 1. 4. You have your bible at hand, read the passage.

Hon. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And sud-

denly there came a sound from Heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting, and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire; and it sat on each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Evan. A sound from heaven filled the house where they were sitting. They were then, as it were, corporally immersed in it, and as it respected their souls their every power was, as it were, immersed in the Spirit, swallowed up as it were in that miraculous plenitude of Divine Influence. Which is the most apt figure of this? The sprinkling a few drops of water on the face; or the immersing of the whole body in water?

What, in this respect, accords not with the understanding of Mr. S. has accorded with better understandings than either his or mine. Grotius has been mentioned already, I will now add Le Clerc, "He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit; as I plunge you in water, he shall plunge you. To to speak in the "Holy Spirit." *Remarks on the New Testament*, at Matt. 3. 1. But that which the scriptures teach us to consider as designedly represented in baptism, is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ; and the communion his people have with him therein. Rom. 6. 3, 4, 5. Col. 2. 12. The suffering Saviour was immersed in death, his faithful followers are immersed in water, as a resemblance of that death. He was laid in the gloomy sepulchre, they in a watery grave. He arose at the appointed day; they emerge from the water. Through the influence of his death and resurrection, they die to sin, and rise again to newness of life; and though their bodies must die; "yet as the Lord the Saviour rose, so all his followers must."

These are the things the Apostle has taught us to consider as represented by baptism ; which he allusively calls a *burial*. The mode therefore, must be immersion ; for neither sprinkling nor pouring, bears any resemblance to an interment.

Hon. " Neither the Baptism of John, nor of the Apostles could be a figure of that which was not known. The Disciples of Jesus were very ignorant of any such thing being to happen to their master ; for they supposed, as the Pharisees did, that Christ would abide for ever. They could not then consider Baptism as referring to his burial."

Evan. For the same reason you may as well say, that the Morning and Evening Sacrifices, to which John alluded when he said, *Behold the Lamb of God*, &c. could not be Types of the Sacrifice of Christ for Sin.

Hon. The sufferings and death of Christ are represented in the Lord's Supper.

Evan. And why not in Baptism too ? We need *line upon line, and precept upon precept*. Because the Paschal Lamb represented the death of Christ, did no other sacrifice prefigure the same event ?

Hon. Christians are said to be *crucified with Christ*, but it does not thence follow, that baptism must literally resemble crucifixion.

Evan. They are not said to be *crucified* with Christ in Baptism ; but they are said to be *buried* with him in Baptism. The justly celebrated George Fervidus, of Mr. S. honestly says ; " It is certain that in the words of our text (Rom. 6, 3, 4.) there is an allusion to the manner of Baptism, which was by immersion, which our own Church allows, and insists upon it that children should be immersed in water, unless those that bring the children to be

baptized assure the Minister that they cannot bear the plunging." *Mr. Whitfield's Eighteen Sermons*, p. 297.

Hon. One word more and I have done. "Pouring water on, or sprinkling the subject with water, seems to have been the primitive mode."

Evan. Not the scriptural mode, as I think has been already proved, and with respect to the practice of Christians in the first centuries, it admits of no dispute, that immersion was the mode.

"Immersion (says Dr. Whitby) was religiously observed by all Christians for thirteen centuries. *Note*, on Rom. 6. 4. "Antiently (says Archbishop Tillotson) those who were baptized put off their garments, which signified their putting off the body of sin; and were immersed and buried in the water, to signify their death to sin; and then did rise again out of the water, to signify their entrance upon a new life. And to these customs the Apostle alludes. Rom. 6. 2, Gal. 3. 27."

Hon. I thank you, my friend, for your attention to the subject; and am constrained to confess, that immersion *in the name of the Father. and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, is that which it appears to me, was enjoined by our Lord, that to which his own example, and the practice of the primitive church directs, and that which the design of baptism requires. I trust, that, from love to Jesus, I shall in this ordinance obey and follow him.

Evan The Lord enable you, from the best of motives so to do: and grant you his presence and blessings.

beginning with the Minister that they can do better
the phrasing, Mr. W. H. Wood & the other members.

Now, one word more and I have done. I have
a few words on the subject of the subject with which
I have to do.

I have tried the original model, and I think that
it is already proved, and which is well in the hands
of the children in the last instance, it is a model
in the history of the history of the world.

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